



Mount Rainier National Park Winter Trail Report – 04/01/15

Please note the date for reports and recognize changes may have occurred since the report was made. If an area does not have a specific report, conditions are unknown as of the date of this summary. Check the Northwest Avalanche Center Report and the Mount Rainier Recreational Weather Report before heading out. Avalanche assessment and route-finding skills are needed for many activities in the park at this time of year. Call the **Longmire Information Center** between 9:00 AM and 4:30 PM if you have questions (360-569-6575).

Weather Report Link: <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/sew/get.php?wfo=sew&pil=REC&sid=SEW>

Avalanche Report Link: <http://nwac.us/avalanche-forecast/current/cascade-west-south/>

Southwest Summary, 04/01/15:

No April Fools, the park has seen a few inches of snow since the last report. The biggest difference this time is that forecast shows more snow at mid-elevations (~3000') and higher, instead of an immediate warming trend.

Longmire Area Trails, 04/01/15:

A few inches of snow can be found in open areas, with most areas under the forest canopy still snow free. Most trails can be hiked with good waterproof boots. The next week might see a few more inches of snow at Longmire, but melting is more likely with most freeze levels at 3000' and Longmire at 2700'.

Carter Falls still cannot be accessed from the south on the Wonderland Trail heading east due to a washed out bridge. Folks are hiking to Carter Falls from Narada Falls, but you need to be ready for snow and icy conditions in the Narada Falls area.

No specific trail reports received since the new snow. All back-country users are reminded that risk assessment is up to individual users. Reporting conditions to rangers is always appreciated.


Based on conditions though, hikes such as the Wonderland Trail towards Indian Henry's, Eagle Peak, and Comet Falls are strongly discouraged now. Any back-country user who chooses to do these routes needs to be ready for snow and ice, and most importantly they need to be extremely confident in their navigation and avalanche assessment skills.

Longmire Winter Trails PDF:

<http://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/upload/Longmire-Winter-Trails-Dec13.pdf>

Paradise Area Trails, 04/01/15:

Despite a few inches of fresh snow, Paradise is still well below average for snow depth. The snow depth is also quite variable, going from a few inches deep to a few feet deep in a short



distance. All of the fresh snow is likely going to hide some dangerous terrain features just underneath, such as tree wells and creeks that were previously exposed.

While conditions are great for snowshoeing and skiing, safety (including navigation) is up to each individual. Following the tracks of others is not recommended, as those people may not have known where they were going, or been traveling a safe route.

It is important now more than ever before that you are comfortable and skilled at navigating in the snow now that there is only one marked route at Paradise (Nisqually Vista Route). **ALL OTHER ROUTES ARE UNMARKED.** It is just you, over a quarter million acres of wilderness and feet of snow on the southern flank of an active volcano.

Due to our unusual snow conditions, the Paradise Autumn Recreation Map will provide the best overview of suggested routes to avoid avalanche terrain. Just note that the Paradise Valley Road and Steven's Canyon Road are still unplowed.

<http://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/upload/paradise-autumn-recreation-with-map-oct11.pdf>

East Side Summary:

No recent reports. Using Longmire and Paradise conditions should provide a reasonable idea of what to expect.

Northwest Area Summary, 03/10/15:

Call (360) 829-9639 for the **Carbon River Ranch Ranger Station** hours. There is self-registration for climbing and backpacking set up outside when the Carbon River Ranch Ranger Station is not staffed.

Similar to the southwest side of the park, the northwest side has compact snow and ice at higher elevations with a little over a foot of snow in the Mowich Lake area (4292').

Trails with significant concerns due to early season storm damage will be listed below. If a trail does not have a report, expect downed trees and snow at elevations comparable to the southwest side of the park. Traction devices and navigation skills are needed for any snow travel.

Carbon Glacier lower log crossings are washed out as well as slide and washout damage near the lower crossing. No report beyond because of this.

For hiking past Paul Peak on the Wonderland Trail, the North Mowich River foot bridge is out.

Chenuis Falls are inaccessible due to the foot bridge being washed about between the falls and the old road grade.

The Rain Forest Loop trail is no longer a loop as the bridge there is also washed out.

The trail to Spray Falls is passable but no reports beyond into Spray Park area, expect compact snow.
